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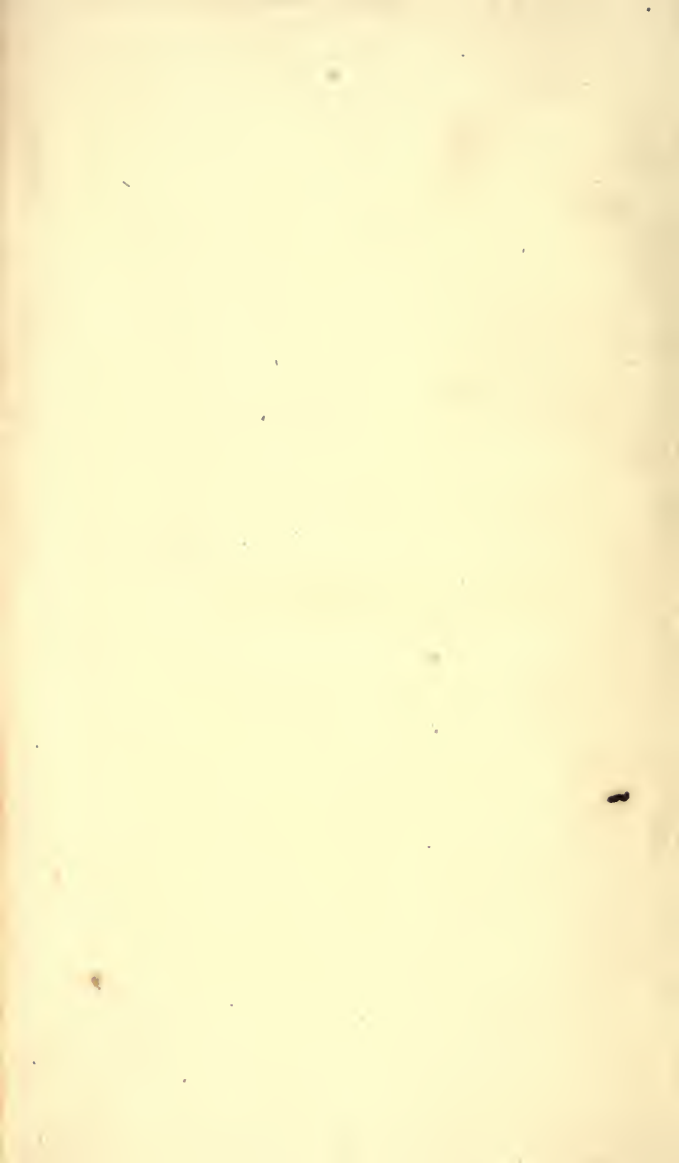
John Waldie

*Novels and
Romances.*

No.

634





THE
NUN OF ARROUCA.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL

NAVY

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE PRESENT

LONDON:

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THE

NUN OF ARROUCA,

A TALE.

[Russell, (Lord) John, 1st Earl Russell]

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THE NUN OF ARROUCA,

A TALE.

THE MEN OF ARBOREA

It was early in the year 1810 that
Edward Peacock, then on the staff of
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THE NUN OF ARROUCA.

It was early in the year 1810 that Edward Pembroke, then on the staff of an English general, made a journey, with two of his brother officers, through that part of the north of Portugal which lies between the Mondego and the Douro. In the course of his tour he paid a visit to the convent of Arrouca.

The convent of Arrouca stands in the bottom of a small valley, inclosed on every side by high mountains. The roads which traverse these mountains

are scarcely passable even for mules; the mountains themselves are bleak and desolate, and the traveller is astonished when, after a long and painful descent, he finds abundant crops of Indian corn, and sees a village flourishing in so unfrequented a spot. But his attention is still more powerfully attracted by the sight of a large, solid, and lofty mansion, of a size befitting the residence of a king. The towers of a church, however, and the gratings of the windows, soon lead the mind to the conclusion that the building must be a convent of nuns:— and such it is. It was towards evening, in the spring, when the sun, after a wet day, had appeared only, as it were, to give splendour to his setting, that Ed-

ward, rode down the mountain. The bell of the convent tolled, and the sound, unlike the bells of a church in a town, or even of an English village church, seemed to occupy to itself the whole atmosphere. There was a solemnity in its deep tone, and a majesty in the aspect of the surrounding mountains, which contrasted agreeably with the freshness of the little fields of corn, and the splendour of the sun shining upon the white houses of the peasantry of the village. Edward soon arrived at the gate of the convent, where he delivered to a porter a letter for the lady abbess, and was immediately directed to a monastery of monks which stands opposite to that of the nuns. He was re-

ceived with the warm hospitality which distinguishes the monks of that country. After dinner, a special message invited him to attend the lady abbess to tea; which in Portugal, as in England, is a regular custom. He followed two of the monks, and was introduced at the grate to a venerable old lady, who sat on one side of it. Next to her, and filling up all the centre of the grate, were several nuns; but all, except one, past middle age. On the other side were three or four young ladies, pensioners at the convent. An hour passed in formal compliments between the lady abbess, the stranger, and the monks, not much to Edward's amusement. There was one of the nuns, however, who showed herself to be

capable of more rational conversation. She was a person of dark complexion, with an expressive countenance, which seemed to have been once handsome, and black eyes, which retained the brilliancy of intelligence and goodness, though they had lost, if they had ever possessed, the fire which inflames the heart. In talking to Edward, she said, "To-morrow you shall see our church; our jewels are very valuable. You will also see my sister, who is, however, twenty years younger than myself." These were all the words that fell from the lips of the nun; but Edward's imagination immediately created for him the portrait of a beautiful person, condemned to pass her days in seclusion.

This fancy, however, did not prevent his enjoying an excellent night's rest after the fatigues of his journey.

The next morning his expectations were raised to the highest pitch when the monks conducted him to the church. The grandeur of the architecture, in the best style of Gothic, proved to him the munificence of the founders; the brilliancy of the gilded ceiling, and the profusion of marble and painting in the chapels, attested the wealth and prosperity of the institution. A railing, also gilt, extended across the church, and divided the nuns from the strangers and inhabitants who resorted to public worship. To this railing several of the nuns advanced to meet Pembroke; one

showed him the brilliant cross of rubies, which the virgin of Pilar, whose chapel was beside him, wore only six times in the year; another displayed, in a gold casket, a finger of St. John the Evangelist; another held in her hand the crosier of St. Bernard, the patron of their order, set round with precious stones, and presented to the convent by the Archbishop of Braga, after the battle of Aljubarota, in which he commanded a wing of the Portuguese army, and was severely wounded. These treasures, each accompanied by its panegyric, and exhibited with all the vanity of a convent, did not, however, satisfy Pembroke. He looked in vain for his former friend and her promised sister. He

rather eluded than answered the numerous questions that were put to him, whether the church was, or was not, as handsome as that of Batalha? whether their relics were not more valuable than those of the nuns of Santa Clara at Villa do Conde? whether their jewels were not as rich as those of the cross given by St. Lewis, king of France, to the cathedral of Santiago, of Compostella, &c. &c. At last, however, two figures appeared from a door at the end of the church. He immediately recognised his friend of the evening before leading a younger nun. As she advanced, he perceived that whilst the other nuns wore a black veil, hers was white. The eyes of Pembroke, fixed upon her approach,

had soon marked her features and her figure. Her shape was perfect, her step and every movement of her arms graceful and noble. Her face was not regularly beautiful, excepting that her lips were of the rosiest, and her mouth of the prettiest, that nature ever formed.

Her eyes were not of any certain colour, and were chiefly remarkable for an expression of combined modesty, resignation, and intelligence. Her complexion was fair, and indicated delicacy; her hands were singularly small, and her fingers slender.

The elder nun began the conversation, which was unimportant, and only served to show that her younger sister wished to pay due respect to a foreign

guest, but was otherwise anxious to avoid conversation. In a short time the abbess retired, and all the nuns followed her. Pembroke, when he returned to the monastery, did not omit to make many inquiries respecting the young nun he had just seen. He only learnt that her name was Catherine, that she had entered the convent four years before, at the age of fifteen; that the elder nun, whose name was Justina, was her sister; that she had a brother who had large possessions in the north of Portugal, and also an uncle who was grand inquisitor at Coimbra.

Pembroke was obliged to pursue his journey early the next morning; to join the staff of the army to which he be-

longed. He heard with pleasure, however, that on that same night a solemn service was to be performed to entreat the favour of Divine Providence upon the arms of the allies. About nine in the evening he repaired to the church. The altar and the choir were brilliantly illuminated with wax tapers. The rest of the church being left in darkness, had an appearance of being larger and grander than it really was—monks passing to and fro in the side aisles appeared at a vast distance, and gave a picturesque solemnity to the scene. A fine picture of Murillo, representing St. Bernard, kneeling in the white dress of his order, with the Virgin and angels in the heavens, hung over the altar. The in-

cense rose in fumes from the censers; the mind of Pembroke was already toned to the occasion, when the nuns began the Jubilate. He had not before perceived that they were behind a grating on the side. The sweetness and harmony of their voices went at once to his heart, and made him for the time a convert to their faith. "Why," he said to himself, "why should not the senses which have been given us by the Divinity be thus innocently gratified to do him honour? Why should not religion call our whole being to its aid?"

In these feelings he continued to listen, and to look with ecstasy on the scene that was going on. At twelve o'clock the service finished. The lady abbess

and the nuns then descended to the grate to say a few words to their visitor. They all gave him their good wishes in the campaign he was about to enter upon. The nun of the white veil and her sister stood apart. He went up to them, and received from them both, from the elder warmly, and, at length, from the younger, gently, but feelingly, expressions of their sympathy and interest. He was about to answer, when a knot of white riband in the form of a cross fell from the veil of the younger through the grating. He took it up, and putting it in his bosom, hastily said, he thus constituted himself her knight. "Rather that of the faith," said the nun seriously. The abbess

and the other nuns had already turned to go away, and had nearly reached the end of the church; the two nuns turned to follow them, and by a waving of their hands bade adieu to the English officer.

It will easily be believed that the nun of Arrouca held a prominent place in the imagination of Pembroke. He joined the army, however, and nothing more was heard of him at the convent for several months. It was the beginning of that campaign by which the English commander saved Portugal in the lines of Torres Vedras, and gave a turn to the destinies of Europe. After the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo, his army retreated slowly and regularly till it reached the heights of Busaco. None

who have seen it can forget that remarkable spot. On passing beyond the stone wall which incloses a grove of oaks; the traveller who visits the scene of that victory finds himself on the crest of a terrace of prodigious elevation, and looks down on a plain, or what appears to be a plain, to which the descent is precipitous and abrupt. On the summit of this mountain the general of the allies, although his reinforcements had not joined him, determined to make a stand. On the summit of this mountain, Massena, the immortal defender of Genoa, although he might have turned the position, resolved to attack the combined army. The result of the battle is well known. It gave a confidence to the

new troops of the Portuguese, which they maintained through the rest of the war.

The inmates of the convent of ArroUCA heard with terror of the near approach of the invading army. A peasant, residing on the convent lands, brought the intelligence that a small corps of French troops were marching in the direction of the village. The lady abbess and the nuns instantly prepared to fly. Mules were procured; the jewels of the convent were sent to a safe place, and the nuns, after an exhortation from the lady abbess, departed with all possible speed to their respective friends in the country not visited by war. Among the rest Justina and Catherine set off on the road

towards Oporto. They had not gone far before the steward of the convent came up and told them that the French detachment had been beaten off by a body of English cavalry and Portuguese sharpshooters; and that the peasantry were bringing the wounded to the convent. Justina instantly took her resolution. "Catherine," she said, "we must go back; these brave men have fought to protect us, and it would be an eternal shame to Christian charity, if we allowed our fears to prevent us from giving them the aid of our skill and care." So saying, she turned her horse: Catherine followed without speaking, and, indeed, without perfect possession of her mind. They repassed

along the stony and difficult road in silence, and went on beyond the convent in the direction of San Pedro do Sul. About a league from the convent they found several carts coming down a hill; the miserable pale beings stretched upon them told too well what they were. The screeching of the carts without springs, and the jolting motion, from rock to rock, made their sufferings ten times more painful; and at every fall of the wretched vehicle, from the top of a large stone to the bottom of a deep rut, some brave man, whose leg was shattered, or whose side was bleeding, attested by his countenance the pain which he had not the weakness to show by a single groan or lamentation. The

compassion of Catherine was deeply and instantly excited; but how much was her interest increased, when she saw in the last cart the young and handsome officer who had so lately paid a visit to the convent of ArroUCA. He was now pale, and bleeding profusely; yet he recognised, with evident delight, the nun who approached him, and a flush crossed his cheek for a moment, whilst that of Catherine became as pale as his own had just been. The convoy proceeded as far as they could by carts, and then by litters, borne on men's backs, to the convent. On the way, the two nuns learnt from a hussar who accompanied Pembroke, that after the battle of Busaco, he had been sent with orders to Colonel Trant, then on the extreme left

of the position : that he had volunteered, with a small party of horse and foot, to oppose the French detachment, which was known to be marching for provision and plunder towards Arrouca : that by placing his infantry behind the walls that lined the road, he had broken the enemy, and forced him to retreat : that he had then charged, caused a great loss to the French, and changed the retreat into a flight ; but that at the moment of his victory he had received a shot which had broken his arm, and penetrated his side.

Catherine reflected on these events with pain ; but there was still a small drop of satisfaction in the draught of sorrow, when she thought on Pembroke's volunteering to defend the con-

vent of ArroUCA. Was it not something more than a simple performance of military duty?

When the wounded reached the convent, now completely deserted, every care was taken to afford them assistance and comfort: a surgeon luckily had come with them. Justina and Catherine went from room to room administering the drugs, and preparing the linen and food from the convent stores, which the surgeon pronounced to be necessary. Pembroke absolutely insisted on being attended the last: this was so far complied with as to relieve first all those whose wounds threatened more immediate danger. On coming to him, the surgeon found that his arm was

completely broken, and that the bullet had also penetrated the side, and caused a great effusion of blood: it had not gone far, however, and was easily extracted. The surgeon intimated that rest, and a night without fever, would make him perfectly easy respecting his patient. The nuns were overjoyed with this news; but Catherine was particularly affected by a circumstance that no one else remarked. On taking off the coat and waistcoat, the shirt was found covered with blood. Stained in the same manner was a little cross of riband pinned on the shirt, just over the heart. Catherine recognised the sign, and it changed in an instant her whole being.

The next morning, early consultation was held on the removal of the wounded. This was very desirable; as, although the French had been beaten off this time, they might renew their expedition. It was found, happily, that all were in a state to move; and it was agreed to go towards Oporto. Justina, however, proposed to Pembroke to stay, with herself and her sister, a short time at a country-house of her brother's at Ponte do Lima. Perhaps she did not mean that this invitation should be accepted; but Pembroke so eagerly closed with the proposal, that not a word more could be said.

The journey to Ponte do Lima was prosperous; but immediately on arriving, Pembroke, heated by the journey,

was attacked by a severe fever. The wound in his side assumed an unpleasant and critical appearance. The two nuns spared no pains or exertions in attending to their guest. All their skill, indeed, amounted to little in the scale of surgical science ; but the gentleness of their manners, the soothing voice in which they made their inquiries, their care in excluding all noise, the grief that they showed at any bad symptom, and their joy at any sign of amendment, powerfully assisted the work of nature. It is when we are ill that we are sensible to the slightest circumstance, and the most minute attention ; it is when we are ill, therefore, that we perceive, what in rude health we often neglect or depreciate,

the real value of woman's assistance and affection.

The brother of the nuns, Don Miguel Correa, received his guest with warmth, and was not wanting in liberality and kindness.

The approaches of love are very different in a young man and a young girl. As power belongs to man, his love, however humble it may seem, has always in it a character of ambition and of dominion. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," it is said, and the expression is suitable to the passion. It is with an inward chafing and a haughty impatience that man bears the servitude which love imposes on him. However violent his passion, the yoke sits not

easy, and would be soon thrown off, did not he look to be the sovereign of the beauty of whom he is now the slave.

Not so the love, the first and early love of woman. She begins with taking an interest in the welfare and happiness of another. It is such a delight, and a delight so pure to live out of herself, and to feel joy and sorrow at the prosperity or adversity, the wealth or the poverty, the health or the sickness of the man who has inspired or awakened her feelings! She wishes not to tell the interest she feels; to watch and be silent is at once pleasure and innocence. Then comes confidence; to be able to speak with unreserve of minute events to a person who will attach a value to

them, is another luxury of the heart. Next comes compassion; pity for the object of friendship and affection, who is pining away with love, and attaches his existence to a smile and a word of his mistress: and thus it is that woman's ruin is completed! Oh! lamentable world! that the disgrace and the degradation which attend the coward, the swindler, and the perjured liar, should be collected and aggravated to heap misery on the head of the unfortunate woman, in whose heart the purest affection and the most exalted sentiment have led to an hour of human frailty! Difficult, indeed, is the path of woman's conduct, since disinterestedness, and truth, and charity, and piety, when

not fortified by firmness and resolution, will all be insufficient to preserve her honour!

Catherine became daily more attached to Edward. Under pretence of attending upon his health, she sate in the room where he lay stretched upon the couch, often remaining for hours without speaking, but feeling abundant delight in being near him, in breathing in the same place, in not being absent from him. She found that all the society which collected in the evening, composed of those she had known when young, was insipid and distasteful. Not all the wit, or all the compliment in the world was to be weighed against the silence of the English officer. She felt

that it was wrong. She knew at once she was feeling more than her vocation justified. Every morning she entered the church, she prayed to be delivered from the image that always followed her. She knew not, indeed, that the very thought of driving the person beloved out of her heart, contributed to fix him there, and that the attempts she made to regain her liberty were the proof and ratification of her bondage. Yet she was sensible that her regular devotions were interrupted by this new and forbidden imagination, and she found to her sorrow, that though her attention might be at times led away from the subject of her heart, by a frivolous worldly occurrence, she no sooner

tried to compose her mind to inward prayer, than it returned irresistible and triumphant. Her mind could sometimes bear diversion, never meditation. Alarmed by these symptoms, she read with anxiety the works of St. Theresa. There she found traces of the same passion, and that the temptation had been vanquished by perseverance in prayer. She recognised in the ecstatic trances of Theresa the history of those high raptures of religion of which she had herself been lately sensible. She read with interest and admiration the account given by the saint herself of the ineffable delight she experienced in the most favoured moments of prayer. She read, and put the book down with a

sigh. She knew it was no longer in her power to recall those happy visions of perfect love for the Divinity. A fortnight before, and she was exalted in her own estimation by the strength and enthusiasm of her devotion—she believed herself favoured by the powers of heaven; but now, Edward was her whole being.

Edward, on his part, saw well the degree to which he had excited the feelings of the young nun. Were it nothing else, such a knowledge could not but please his vanity. To be the first object of a young and beautiful woman must be gratifying to a man's heart; but it was a still prouder triumph to think that he had led away her mind from her

chosen sentiment, and caused a struggle in her breast between himself and her Creator. Rash and criminal was the thought, arrogant and impious the indulgence of it; but still when he reflected on the easy conquests of men of the world over venal or vicious paramours, and contrasted it with his own victory over the affections of a spotless, a sinless, and pious virgin, his heart rejoiced in spite of himself. Yet on thinking further, his mind acquired a better tone. His family in England was one of those which dissent from the established church. Precepts of religion, and lessons of morality, had been early implanted in his breast; and, although he had since lived in the promiscuous so-

ciety of young officers, and joined in all their pursuits, yet his life had never been marked by the seduction of a resisting and virtuous woman. He could not but feel that he was now embarking on a sea of passion, of which the well-known and fatal tide would lead the young and gentle Catherine to degradation, perhaps to death. He took the virtuous course, and resolved to shun any farther temptation.

Yet, lest any reader should be misled into too great an admiration for Edward, it must here be observed, that this resolution proved decisively that he was not really deeply in love. Love never sees any danger for its object but that of not feeling a mutual passion: love

imagines that to love and be loved again is all the happiness of which a mortal is capable, and it therefore thinks to raise an idol when in reality it stabs a victim. Pembroke, in fact, had hitherto been more affected in fancy than in reality. His imagination was on fire, but his heart was not deeply touched. The riband which he had tied on his breast showed that his head was full of one object; but was not the result of a great and overwhelming passion. Yet he found it painful as well as difficult to make up his mind to forego at once the charms of a growing inclination. After long hesitation he decided that the only way in which he could make the effort was to go at once to Catherine and inform

then he should leave Ponté do Lima the next morning. The shock once over, he thought he should be bound in honour to persevere. Mustering up all his resolution, then, he descended the stairs with some exertion, for he had not nearly recovered, nor was yet gone farther than a sofa in an adjoining room. He found Catherine embroidering alone on a terrace which overlooked the garden. She inquired with interest about his health, and expressed some apprehensions as to the consequences of his leaving his apartment so soon. He answered very shortly; and immediately after told her, without preface, that he was going to rejoin the army the next morning. "So

soon?" she said, with an air of astonishment. "Yes," he said, "my duty calls me to the army: the last letters that I have received say it is possible the enemy may soon be in motion; and at Oporto, no doubt, I shall find a vessel to take me to Lisbon." Whilst he was uttering these words, in a stammering and confused manner, he observed the eyes of Catherine fill with tears. She seemed to be attending to her work, but it was evident to him that she did not know what she was doing; she said something about his journey, and the preparations it would require, to which he gave an answer quite away from the subject. The conversation continued for some minutes, but neither knew what

was asked or what was answered; she tried to keep up an appearance of firmness, but her heart was evidently full: he looked at her with increasing interest, and his resolution wavered from one instant to another. At last she rose to go away, when Edward starting up and seizing her hands, said, with an agitated voice, "No, Catherine; I had mistaken my strength; I feel myself too weak to go from here; I shall ask for your hospitality some time longer." She looked at him; the tears suddenly rolled down her eyes, and she said, "Indeed your manner of announcing your departure was somewhat abrupt; we had hoped that your friends here had done something to show their sense of gratitude to

you for your generous services to their country; but I will not say more. I need not say, perhaps, I am glad of your last determination." After these words she turned her eyes to him, with what was meant to be merely a friendly look of reconciliation; but those eloquent ministers betrayed their charge, and expressed by their softness the tenderness of the heart, of which they were the interpreters.

The scene that had just happened inspired Edward with new feelings towards Catherine. From that time he rejected all possibility of happiness without her. He slept little; when he woke, his first thought was of her; and he counted the moments with feverish anxiety till she

came to inquire after his health. When he heard her voice in the passage, his frame trembled all over. When she was present, he scarcely ceased looking at her for a moment. His eyes seemed to gather from hers fresh food for his passion, and by them, more than by words, their hearts spoke to each other. Strange sympathy between the eyes and the affections, which every one who has observed at all must know, but which the skill of the wisest philosopher never would be able to explain!

Catherine, on her side, became more and more involved in the labyrinth, and more and more distressed at its perplexity. A violent struggle took place in her breast between the belief of her

whole life, and this new and appalling enemy of her duty. For if it be true that passion is most powerful in youth, it is also true that the principle of virtue has the greatest force at that period of our lives. For this reason it is that we so often see persons, who have resisted the strongest allurements to sacrifice their honour, their character, or their conscience in the vigour of blood, and the bloom of enjoyment, fall an easy prey to a less temptation, when the dear-bought knowledge of the world has blunted their sense of morality, and thrown a ridicule on the inward glorying of an unblemished conscience. Catherine tried in vain to escape from what she believed to be a guilty, and what

she knew to be a powerful inclination. Her usual resort was to a church not far from the house in which she lived. The country-houses at Ponte do Lima are scattered on the two sides of the river Lima, over which the bridge of that name is thrown. About half a mile from the bridge, close to the river, stands a white church, before which a row of trees leading to the door have been planted. On the opposite side of the river rise the mountains which divide the valley of the Lima from that of the Minho. To this church Catherine was in the habit of repairing in the morning, at mid-day, and in the evening. The peasantry were often assembled round the church, and all of them were ac-

quainted with Catherine, from the acts of charity by which she had endeared herself to those who stood in need of assistance. When they observed her frequent devotions, they blessed her as a true child of God, and would say to one another as she passed, "She is a saint—she is a saint!" These praises wounded the unfortunate nun to the quick, and she had often scarcely entered the church before her tears flowed fast down her cheeks.

Edward was now recovering rapidly. One evening, as the sun was setting, he thought he would try his strength by a short walk. He went out, and the feeling of the air and sight of the heavens gave him a pleasure he could not have

imagined. Encouraged by the delight he felt, he walked on till he came to the church. It was now nearly dark. He entered the door, and could see the altar only by the light of two small lamps that were burning, one on each side of it. He walked up to it, and was turning to quit the place when he saw a female figure with the face covered kneeling in a side chapel. Her black dress made a dark shade on the pavement, but her head was scarcely discernible. He approached gently very near her, and heard these words in the voice of Catherine: "Relieve me from this burden, blessed saint! Save me from this crime, unhappy wretch!" He waited in great emotion till her prayers were concluded: she then

got up and left the church; he slowly followed. When he got out of the door, she was several paces before him; he called aloud—"Catherine!" She turned back, started, and faintly screamed. He walked up to her, but she maintained silence. He also was silent. For some way they walked on without uttering. At length he said, "I came into the church by accident, Catherine; I heard part of what you said." "Do not try to justify yourself," she answered; "I have been, I see, the dupe of artifice; but to watch and surprise my feelings is the way to lose and not to gain my esteem. It is enough." "Nay, Catherine," he said, "accuse me, hate me, if you will, but let it not be on false

suppositions. You seem agitated; sit down here a moment." As he spoke, he pointed to a stone bench which overlooked the river; a birch tree waved its leaves over the bench, and the moon shone brightly on the water and the mountain. They both sate down; Edward explained calmly how he had been led to walk out by the fineness of the evening. It was plain that he was speaking truth, and Catherine felt that falsehood could not wear that voice and manner. She said gently, "I forgive you, but speak to me no more." She was going to rise, but Edward said, "One word more, I beseech you; I have never yet, nor will I now offend your ears by a declaration of that pas-

sion which burns and destroys me. But I am anxious that you should not think this passion, strong as it is, will induce me to plot against your honour or tranquillity. No; though it may lead me to my grave—though life, to which I once looked for glory and fame, will be for the future a long torture; yet nothing shall ever induce me to prefer any object on earth to the care of your happiness.” As he uttered these words Catherine leaned towards him, her soul seemed to melt at his voice; by an impulse of the moment he moved towards her and their lips met; it was but a touch, but it was the touch of a spark of fire. The shock of an earthquake would not have so convulsed

their frames. Catherine suddenly rose and walked rapidly towards her home. Edward followed, but she increased her pace and soon reached the door: he turned round, went back to the seat, and staid there a long time wrapt in his own thoughts.

The effect upon Catherine of what had passed was quite different from that which might have been expected. She looked upon herself with a kind of loathing and abhorrence. She thought no humiliation could be too great, no punishment too severe for one who had so far forgotten her duty and her vow. With bitter tears, and deep groans, and abject lamentations she endeavoured to make herself worthy of prayer. Her

supplications were long and fervent. At length she thought she discovered in her conscience some relief, some hope of consolation and acceptance. She hailed the signal with joy, and soon felt in herself a strength which had been unknown to her since she left the convent of Arrouca. Pembroke, on his side, had also been agitated with the struggles of different passions and opposing principles. No consoling light, however, beamed upon him; and he remained the next morning equally ardent in his love, but uncertain what to think or to do, and wearing a depressed and melancholy look. Catherine received him with calmness, not to say coldness. She said

scarcely any thing, but did not seem at all embarrassed by his presence.

Two days passed in this manner. Catherine was still tranquil, composed, and serious. Edward passed the days in hopeless expectation; the nights in painful agitation of mind. At the end of that time he seemed to grow calmer; but it was the awful silence of a ship at the moment of its sinking. He grew paler and more feeble, and lost strength every day. Catherine began to look at him with alarm; she recollected the distant manner in which she had answered his inquiries; she feared she had been too harsh. Her rigour now rose in judgment against herself, and her pity did still more for Edward than

her admiration. Feeling thus, she endeavoured one day to relieve him from some part of his wild melancholy, without risking her own safety. But the attempt was a dangerous one. It were vain to attempt an account of the scene that followed. All that Love could do in favour of Edward he did; passionate vows, protestations of fidelity, wild exclamations, resolutions to die rather than forego his passion; all these were arms used against the religious determination of the unhappy Catherine. She endeavoured to preserve the calm demeanour she had at first assumed; she fancied perhaps that she succeeded; but it would have been visible even to a less anxious observer than Edward

that she stifled many a rising sob, and wiped away many a tear that came unbidden to her eyes. "Leave me," she said; "pray leave me; do not let me think you ungenerous; do not let me hate the day I knew you!" Thus she entreated him, who had himself been entreating her, and she implored that pity she had come to dispense. Edward, overcome by her agitation, consented to leave her alone; but he asked, as a condition, that she would reflect on what he proposed. Unable to think of living without her, he soothed his mind with the idea that it was possible to disengage Catherine from her vows, and make her his wife. He prayed for permission to

lay this request before her relations, with the sanction of her consent.

Remaining alone, Catherine found that this interview had strangely unstrung her heart. She knew not where to look for the calm reason, the irrevocable devotion that she had before hailed as the harbingers of a life of peace. Her mind was torn in pieces; she scarcely knew what she did or what she thought; and in the confusion of her feelings and her faculties, she could only distinguish a painful feeling that her conscience was offended, and her soul occupied with something wrong. Yet at first she rejected with lofty argument the expedient that Pembroke had proposed.

“ Shall I,” she said, “ who am devoted to the nuptials of a heavenly and eternal lord, sink to the degradation of an earthly marriage? Can I disgrace the habit that I wear, and blast with like infamy the years that are past and the years that are to come? Shall I confess to the world that my religion had no anchor to hold by; that my devotion was the fancy of a child, and my principles unequal to encounter the first temptation that is offered? Shall I lay at the feet of a heretic and a soldier all the feelings, all the purity, all the sublimity of a vocation that has no parallel on earth, and awaits with certainty its final reward in heaven? Shall I renounce heaven itself?”

In this strain of reflection Catherine found arguments strong enough, sublime enough, to outweigh her fatal passion. But the mind to which they occurred was not in a temper to appreciate their value. When she turned to contemplate the other side of the picture, she found no reasons indeed, she dwelt on no argument—but the image of Pembroke rushed into her thoughts, and conquered. She felt—and she resolved.—Such is the power of Love. Let other passions support their dictates by reasonings, that seem to give to their biddings the appearance of judgment: let the cold and selfish desires with which the heart of man is filled assume the disguise of benevolence and wisdom. Love

is sufficient for himself; he requires no sophistry; he triumphs by no syllogism; but, vanquishing nobly, he makes the heart that resists his power bend beneath the sense that it is a god who conquers.

Thus subdued, Catherine informed her trembling lover of the decision, that made him for the time as happy as human creature can be. He wept—he laughed—he poured forth his thanks with words and with eyes. He flew to her relations. To his surprise he found the task less difficult than he expected. They had remarked the infatuation of both the lovers, and it was an anxious object of their deliberations to contrive to break off the intercourse without driving Catherine to a violent step.

They knew not, perhaps, the strength of her character; but they were well acquainted with the history of several military seductions, to which the state of the country had given rise. They received with pleasure therefore the communication of Edward; they insisted, however, that he should depart in two days, and they proposed to meet him all together at Coimbra, where their uncle, the grand inquisitor, would be able to obtain for them the boon they wished. They held out, both to Catherine and Edward, that the favour might be easily obtained; and that their credit would suffice for things of much more importance than dissolving the vows of a nun.

In two days Edward left Ponte do Lima. During this time he was sedulously watched. He saw Catherine only in company of her brother or her sister. But her eyes spoke to him. Those eyes, no longer meek and unimpassioned, as in the convent of ArroUCA, now uttered, without disguise, the sentiments of a heart which had read much in the volume of human feelings; a liquid softness tempered the radiance of their light, and there seemed to be, as it were, an atmosphere around them, which partook of the brilliancy of their orbs.

In a few days Pembroke reached the army, then before Santarem. In a few days more he was at Coimbra. He arrived at two in the morning. By day-

light he stood at the door of the house, at which Justina, Catherine, and her brother had already arrived. Justina and Catherine were soon dressed, and came down to meet him. The sun had just risen, and they walked out together on the banks of the Mondego. The joy of Catherine and Edward at meeting can never be described. They entered the garden of Inez de Castro, well known by the name of the Quinta das Lagrimas. Here Justina sat down on one of the benches, whilst she permitted Edward and Catherine to walk in the inclosed garden before her. Their delight passed all bounds. Now they spoke with hope and confidence of the interview with the grand inquisitor.

ditor, which Catherine was to have that day. Now they enlarged, one after the other, upon the schemes of happiness they had imagined. There was no detail of their future life which fancy had not already planned and arranged. Now again they dwelt, with a satisfaction known only to lovers, upon every particular which had happened to each since they last met. The lock of hair, which Catherine had conveyed to Edward amongst the parcels for his journey, was brought out; the ring which Edward had given to Catherine was found suspended from a riband to her neck. Their happiness seemed to accord with that of nature. The birds were heard for the first time that spring

in full concert. The almond trees had not yet lost their blossom, the buds were springing from the "showres swete" of April; and nature seemed to bless the pair who walked together in such ecstasy of affection! That hour was worth a life of countless wealth, or imperial power. Avarice and ambition have nothing like it. Thus they walked, seeming as if they had an inexhaustible fund of converse; yet now and then making a pause, and fixing their eyes on each other and the scene around them, to collect, as it were, a full consciousness of enjoyment. In one of their turns, however, Catherine stopt short, looking serious and apprehensive, before the fountain, through the clear

waters of which some red spots upon the white stone are shown as the eternal record of the blood of Inez de Castro. Here, it is said, whilst wandering in peace with her children, her cruel father-in-law burst in and sacrificed her innocent life to his resentment against his son! Two very large cypresses hang over a little brook, and give to this secluded garden a melancholy interest, which contrasts with the life and crowded business of the adjoining town. Catherine began to repeat, in a tender and serious tone, those beautiful lines of Camoens :

“ Stava a linda Ines posta em socego.”

“ Those were unhappy loves,” she said :
 “ the world refused its sanction to them,

and their thread was cut. It was a poor consolation for the prince to dig up the remains of his Inez when he was king, and have her crowned. Love is not paid by funeral honours. But how much worse a fate might we expect, Edward, if we acted against religion! Swear to me, then, that if I am ordered to return to my convent, you will not molest my progress!" These words struck Pembroke with awe, and went like ice through his frame. The thought of the grand inquisitor refusing his mediation had never occurred to him. He swore, however, because Catherine's earnest manner would not permit him to do any thing but obey. At this moment Justina called to them, and said it

was time to leave the garden. The hour of twelve approached, and at that hour Catherine was to meet her uncle in the palace of the inquisition.

At twelve o'clock she went. Edward, who was not allowed to accompany her, followed her carriage to the square of the inquisition, and saw her descend and pass through the iron railing, which formed a door at the bottom of the great staircase. She was dressed as he had seen her on the first day of their meeting at ArroUCA, and never did she more combine in her countenance the attractions of a woman and the purity of an angel. Two priests received her at the door, and conducted her alone

up stairs. A Her brother and sister returned home. Edward waited for a long time outside the palace, in expectation of seeing Catherine return. She came not. Night approached; Catherine did not appear. Edward stood or walked up and down in augmenting anxiety till midnight. He then proceeded to the house where Justina resided. She and her brother had quitted Coimbra. The next morning he renewed his inquiries at the palace of the inquisition. He obtained no answer. All his researches were fruitless. He set off in the evening for Ponte do Lima. The brother and sister had not been heard of there. He went

to the convent of Arrouca. After much inquiry he learnt that Justina had returned there; but saw no one. He tried in vain every expedient to obtain an interview. Of Catherine nothing was known. He returned to Coimbra half-distracted. His researches were as fruitless as before. After many days spent in harassing attempts to obtain some clue to the fate of the nun, he found his time of leave more than expired, and he received orders to join the army immediately. He went with a less heavy heart than he could have thought possible. The hope of obtaining a glorious death turned his thoughts into another current, and he seemed to perceive an end to his intolerable misery.

He was soon in action, and distinguished himself by a reckless courage, that seemed rather to court than to stand prepared for death. He repeatedly volunteered in charges of cavalry, that were the most hazardous and destructive. Death swept away numbers by his side, but seemed to neglect one who did not wish to avoid him. After an active campaign, in which he obtained the praise of every officer under whom or with whom he served, he felt himself at liberty to ask for fresh leave. He obtained it, and flew without resting to the convent of Arrouca. When he arrived there, he found for a long time his inquiries abortive. There seemed to be a general prohibition to

afford him the information he wanted. At length a woman, who sometimes had admittance to the convent, informed him that Catherine had returned to ArroUCA, but had again left it some weeks before, in company with her sister; and that she was gone to Viana, a place on the sea-coast, for the recovery of her health, which had been shaken by a long illness. On hearing this intelligence the anxiety of Pembroke redoubled. He instantly mounted his horse, and set off for Viana; which, after travelling two nights, he reached on the second morning. The day happened to be one of the festivals consecrated to the Virgin. The inhabitants of Viana were flocking out

of the town, to pay their devotions at the church of a Madonna, whose image was worshipped with peculiar veneration. Her shrine was situated on the top of a small eminence, about half a league from the town; and the concourse of people that were ascending the hill comprehended the whole population of the place. Pembroke looked at them as they passed in their holiday garments, each wearing a look of charitable devotion and innocent pleasure, that to one in any other circumstances would have afforded gratification. Far behind the crowd he saw two persons advancing slowly along the path in more sober attire. It was Catherine with her sister. As she approached, her features

and figure grew more distinct: Her face wore the slight hectic flush of consumption: her eyes seemed fixed and bright—but bright with a splendour that betokened ill. Her figure was reduced and emaciated; and in her whole features and appearance there was an air of delicacy that seemed to belong rather to a spirit that had already left the world, than to a partaker of the infirmities of flesh. It was plain that

Death over her his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike.

But it was also evident that her thoughts were fixed on things above, and enjoyed the hope of a blessed immortality. Edward stopped involuntarily, and stood motionless, gazing at the figure.

that was before him. At length as she came near she perceived him; uttered a faint scream, and fell. Edward rushed to raise and restore her; but it was impossible: the soul had departed.

* * * * *

Very soon afterwards Edward was obliged to rejoin the army. For a long time he scarcely spoke to any one. By degrees he became more accustomed to his old friends and companions, and seemed to be glad to pass the day in their society. But his conversation was always in one equal and sober tone; any thing that was said, which bore the hue either of mirth or of melancholy, produced a sudden change in his features, and he would then often retire

to remain many hours alone: Violent gaiety he never could bear to see. There was a cloud that never cleared from his brow. On days when the troops were in action, however, his spirits always seemed to rise; in every battle he sought danger, as if it were a relief to the gloom and monotonous sadness of his life. He was admired and beloved by all his companions, but none were ever at their ease with him. If they at any time endeavoured to draw from him the causes of his sorrow he was silent, and sometimes angry. A long and lingering disease put an end to his existence a few months ago. A large bundle of papers was found after his death, containing memoranda of his

life, out of which the foregoing narrative has been drawn. The papers themselves would fill several volumes. Amongst these papers was found the following fragment, written apparently about two years after the great catastrophe of his life: and encounter: hosts of heaven and of hell. But he flies

For a long time the sole occupation of my life has been to struggle with grief. It has been from my infancy a settled principle of my mind, that a man who cannot bear up against misfortune is an object of contempt. Why is reason given to us, or how is fortitude to be shown, if we cannot sustain the onset of adversity? Weak, in my mind, and miserably weak is the man who allows

himself to lie plunged for ever in lamentation. But one degree less despicable is he who has recourse to suicide as a remedy against the pangs of a broken heart. He shows some courage, indeed, in leaping into the gulf of futurity, and encountering, unarmed, the hosts of heaven and of hell. But he flies from a present to meet a future evil, and is no more to be accounted brave than the officer who runs away in the day of battle, is to be praised for valour because he dares the world's obloquy, and the terrors of a military sentence. The act of suicide, besides, resembles the act of a runaway, also, in this; that it is the forfeiture of a whole life to escape the sufferings of a day. With

the exception of a mortal and painful disease, there is scarcely any misfortune for which a man destroys himself, to which time would not bring some kind of remedy*. The loss of money at play; the sudden extinction of hopes of happiness; the destruction of fortune; the death of a beloved person; all these give the sharpest pain when the wound is fresh. A widow, indeed, who has lost the man of her affections, if she has no children, may indeed be wretched; she alone may yield to despondency. But for man there remain a thousand chances. If he should fail of happiness, he need

* Poor Edward! he is here endeavouring to shake off, by arguments that his heart belied, the oppression of his sorrows.—E.

not fail of virtue; the remaining years of his life may be spent in progress towards a better; he may have opportunities of performing acts that will hallow his name for evermore. Then how will he bless the hour when he resisted the temptation of self-murder; how will he rejoice in the recollection that he put on his armour again, and resolved to bear the fight for the remainder of the day!

“The chance of this fortunate result is rendered more probable if the causes of his agony are love and grief. There are no two passions that so much tend to soften and improve the heart. I know not why, but so it is. Love, above all, exclusive and jealous as it is, opens the

affections, and expands the sphere of benevolence. It seems, as it were, to take off an external coat from the heart, that separated and divided us from our species. It makes us feel our weakness; it makes us sensible of our nature; it disposes us to give as well as to require sympathy for ardent and romantic feelings. Grief, on the other hand, depresses our reckless confidence in fortune. When we are happy, and have not felt misfortune, we grow careless of the condition of our fellow creatures. He who passes the day without a pain, is not likely to give himself the disturbance of thinking that there are others pressed down by calamity, or perishing for want. It is of the nature of pro-

sperity to harden the heart. It is of the nature of adversity to make us think of the pains of others. (This I know, for I have felt it. I have wept at the recital of misfortunes, that in other days would not have made me turn my head. But let me endeavour to recollect what has been the course of my grief. I met it, I trust, as a man should do. My experience may be of use to others. In the first days, when I was assured that no power of mine could relieve my misfortune, I was totally cast down—helpless, voiceless, motionless—I was about to say hopeless; but that I was not. A secret, though unreasonable, hope lurked in my mind, and made me conscious of life. When this first stupor

was gone off, I felt more than before the agony of my grief. I could not weep; and that made my suffering the greater. With my brain whirling round, and returning ever and ever to the same thought, I was more like an insane than a reasonable being. For the whole world I would not bear those days again. A dreadful image pursued me; and I wished in vain to be free from the consciousness of misery. In this state all I could do was to refrain from the means of self-destruction. I abhorred the act of suicide, but I felt that the temptation might be too strong for me. Death would have been to me what a fountain is to one who is parched by the heat of the desert. My head seemed

to be in a perpetual fever—horrible sensation!—horrible recollection!

“My first active endeavour was to obtain means of getting sleep, which obstinately fled from me. Opium made me more feverish, and might have destroyed me. The mode I adopted was to walk for a long time together, till I was completely fatigued and worn out. I never left the house till the sun had set. The glare of the day I could not bear. But the soft calm of the evening, and the glorious repose of the night, did much to relieve me. The feeling of being in the open air, under the full canopy of heaven, was itself a relief. It seemed as if my being was choked and stifled by the narrow limits of houses

and rooms. In the vast expanse of the sky, in the cool freshness of the air, in the sublime aspect of the stars, I found room for my heart to expand, and a still influence soften the trouble of my thoughts. In this way I wandered for hours; sometimes gazing at the splendid firmament, and sometimes hurrying on till by the fatigue of my body I could relax the fatal speed of my mind. This was my best resource. The sight of a summer night, the majesty and tranquil course of the moon, the bright solemnity of the stars, the depth of the firmament, have alone power over a soul that is gone beyond all the remedies of friendship or of art!

“ When I returned home, weary and

less agitated, I often obtained for a few hours the benefit of sleep. It is true that I never slept long, and that I woke each time with the dreadful consciousness of my misery, as fresh, as strong, as overwhelming as at the first moment when I felt it. These moments of awaking were indeed dreadful! In acquiring strength to live, we add, at the same time, to the vigour and intensity of pain. Grief inflicts with double sharpness the penalty of the hours that we have been exempt from her lash!

“ It was a long time before I was able to find any occupation that could at all distract my thoughts. Society, even that of the most intimate friend, was irksome to me. It was the habit of

my mind not to communicate my sad thoughts to others. My temper is reserved. It was in this disposition that I one day wrote the following lines :

“ Yes ; there is something rugged in my soul,
That will not suffer happiness to dole
Its crumbs of pity from a plenteous board,
Where pomp and wretchedness but ill accord :
Nay, e'en from friends—though friends I boast
to have,

Who well deserve the name—true, just, and
brave ;

Yet their imperfect sympathies offend,
And wound the grief with which they mean to
blend.

Mine is no common sorrow, that may strike

A hundred hearts, a hundred minds alike :

It was a dart that aimed at me alone,

Inflicted anguish, to none other known.

Singled from out the herd of human kind,

With them no more my station is assign'd :

I wander up and down—but every where,

The fatal weapon in my side I bear ;

A restless, ceaseless, constant cank'ring pain,
That saps my life, and eats away my brain.
Yet still, still in the field of human life
I must hold on; and in the dreadful strife
Of wolves call'd men, in deserts call'd the world,
Such is my fate, my flag must be unfurl'd:
This is my destiny—it must be so—
My business, not my bosom, they shall know:
Hence be my heart, like ocean, common road
For all, but only for the dead abode;
Man shall not sound the deep o'er which he steers,
And none shall count its treasures or its tears.

“ But if I could not find relief in the company of friendship, how little could I bear the shallow mirth of what is called society. There were no moments to me so painful as those in which I was obliged to behold the careless gaiety of those who had no grief. It was unreasonable, it was absurd to suppose that they could share in my afflic-

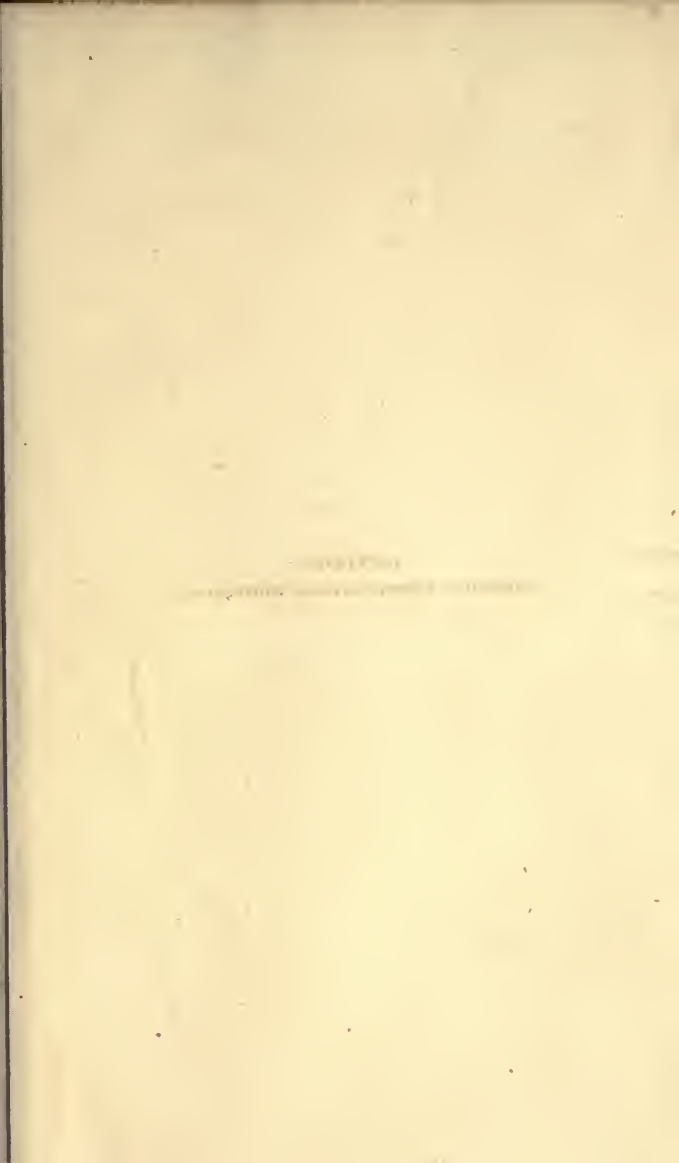
tion; yet every laugh I heard, seemed to my mind to be in hard-hearted neglect and derision of my sorrows. Far from me be the hypocrisy of saying, that, though wretched myself, I was rejoiced at seeing others happy. I hated to see joyful and smiling countenances; I hated to hear the din and song of merry hearts; I hated to see the sunshine and the glare of a fine day; I hated to hear the birds welcome the return of spring. What is singular, perhaps, I could bear as little the resource of occupying my mind by novels and romances. I found all feigned distresses a mocking and an insult of my real grief. It seemed to me to be a species of sacrilege to imitate the hallowed my-

stery of sorrow, for the sake of gratifying the vanity of an author and amusing the listlessness of readers. I turned from such fictions with disgust. The only reading I could bear was the lives of celebrated men; their chances, their calamities, their sufferings. Then I felt ennobled by having the same capacity of feeling with the best and greatest of our species, and it was something that if adversity had blasted my growth, it had likewise struck the wisest and most virtuous of mankind. Nay, religion itself displayed an example——.”

THE END.

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The nun of Arroúça]

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